

Random Encounters The Itinerant Bazaar

By Stan!



Meet the Proprietors

The Itinerant Bazaar may not be unique in the vastness of the planes, but chances are that they are the only planes-traveling merchants that most of their customers are likely to ever meet. A visit from the bazaar can be the spark that allows a curious mind to begin delving into the mysteries of the planes, or it can be the impetus for a group of adventurers to start thinking in terms other than their local Material Plane politics.

In any case, the merchants associated with the bazaar can be important people in the lives of the people they meet. In particular, the motivations and inclinations of the bazaar's proprietors may have a strong impact on how they treat the PCs.

What About Stat Blocks?

The Itinerant Bazaar is not at all a place for combat. Furthermore, the exact capabilities of the merchants and proprietors are not important, except in proportional relation to the PCs. Therefore, we do not present firm statistics for the characters below. Instead we provide guidelines to the DM for tailoring them to his or her specific campaign and give you a sample set of statistics for each character that can give you a good idea of where to start.

As a rule, the NPCs below should be three levels higher than the PCs when they first meet. The DM may decide from that point on whether to keep the NPCs more-or-less permanently at that level or allow them to gain levels at the same rate as the PCs (or any other rate).

Nana Júichi

Nana is a middle-aged female gnome with long silver hair that she keeps braided and tied tight to the back of her head in a pair of buns. She has a winning smile and is as gregarious as they come; she spends hours talking with customers and even passersby who have no intention of buying anything in her stall. Probably because her effervescent personality is mixed with her diminutive size, people find it very easy to trust Nana and they often open up to her with personal information that they haven't told even their closest friends. She just has a way of making them feel safe.



Sadly, this is all a charade. Nana is actually a very bitter, cynical, manipulative person who uses people's trust to her own advantage. She began life as an orphan left to fend for herself in the streets of a large city on the Material Plane. There she developed the basic skills of a pickpocket and confidence artist, and she learned to value no one and nothing over her own comfort and safety. After being caught by the constables and thrown in jail for six months, Nana decided that she needed a less risky way to make a living. She had grown into a charming young woman, and she used her ability to make personal connections to become a broker -- neither a merchant nor a buyer, but someone who could put the two together and be paid a commission for doing so. This might have been the whole story of her life except that a wizard client asked for her help in solving a problem in another city. The matter was urgent, so the man used the *shadow walk* spell to allow them to travel to the other city. Nana concluded the deal to the customer's satisfaction, but instead of taking her usual fee, she asked him to teach her everything he knew about the Plane of Shadow.

Nana began using the Plane of Shadow to crisscross her world and making deals that no one else could. Whenever she encountered a need that she could not fulfill, she found someone who could and brokered the deal instead. Eventually, she had more connections through the Plane of Shadow than she ever did in her hometown. She was content to use these connections sparingly, one at a time, until she met Luvi Tonne. His idea for an interplanar exchange made her realize that she could do more than gather money (which she was doing exceptionally well). After spending enough time at this, she could actually use her connections to manipulate whole nations and change the course of history by making herself the most powerful political figure in the entire Material Plane.

At this point, she is still in the relative early stages of that plan -- traveling with the bazaar and gathering information on the strengths, weaknesses, and tendencies of nobles and governments across the map. Eventually, she plans to leave the bazaar and use this information to begin amassing real power.

Nana's Stats

Nana should be either a straight rogue or a rogue/bard multiclass. She should have high Dexterity and Charisma scores, but a low Strength score. She always has the maximum number of ranks possible in Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Sense Motive, and Spot.

Early in her career, Nana should pick up feats that are helpful to a pickpocket, such as Deft

Hands, Nimble Fingers, and Stealthy. Later on she should focus on feats that help her in social engineering, such as Investigator, Leadership, Negotiator, and Persuasive.

Sample Statistics for 5th Level

Nana Júichi: Female gnome rogue 4/bard 1; CR 5; Small humanoid; HD 4d6+4 plus 1d6+1; hp 22; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -2; Atk +4 melee (1d4/19-20, +1 *dagger*); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4/19-20, +1 *dagger*); SA sneak attack +2d6, spell-like abilities; SQ bardic knowledge +3, bardic music (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire courage +1) 1/day, evasion, gnome traits, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Craft (alchemy) +4, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +9, Escape Artist +5, Gather Information +12, Hide +16, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (the planes) +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Perform (act) +8, Search +6, Sense Motive +7, Spot +3, Tumble +6; Nimble Fingers, Stealthy.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day -- *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *prestidigitation* (DC 14), *speak with animals* (burrowing mammal only; duration 1 minute). Caster level 1st.

Bardic Knowledge: Nana may make a bardic knowledge check with a bonus of +3 to see whether she knows some relevant information about local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Bardic Music: Nana can use her song or poetics to produce magical effects on those around her.

Countersong (Su): Nana can counter magical effects that depend on sound by making a Perform check for each round of countersong. Any creature within 30 feet of her that is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack may use Nana's Perform check result in place of his or her saving throw if desired. Countersong lasts for 10 rounds.

Fascinate (Sp): Nana can cause a single creature within 90 feet that can see and hear her to become fascinated with her. Nana's Perform check result is the DC for the opponent's Will save. Any obvious threat breaks the effect. Fascination lasts 1 round.

Inspire Courage (Su): Allies who can hear Nana receive a +1 morale bonus on saves against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls. The effect lasts for 5 rounds after the ally can no longer hear her.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Nana takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Gnome Traits: Nana has weapon familiarity (gnome hooked hammers are martial weapons). She adds +1 to the Difficulty Class for all saving throws against her illusion spells. She also has a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against illusions, a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against kobolds and goblinoids, and a +4 dodge bonus against giants. In addition, she has a +2 racial bonus on Craft (alchemy) and Listen checks (already figured into the statistics above).

Trap Sense (Ex): Nana gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Trapfinding: Nana can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a DC higher than 20.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Nana can react to danger before her senses would normally allow her to do so. She retains her Dexterity bonus to AC even if she is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Bard Spells Known (2; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 -- *know direction*, *light*, *open/close*, *read magic*.

Possessions: +1 *dagger*, *ring of protection* +1.

Luvi Tonne

Luvi Tonne is an elegant male half-elf with an air of sophistication that often makes him seem aloof. His hair is cut very short and he slicks it back with an oil that surrounds him with a scent reminiscent of a springtime breeze. This look accentuates his elven features, making it seem as though his ears are even longer and more pointed and his eyes larger and more catlike. His eyes are the color of ice, and his smile (which he offers only to his closest friends) can seem chilling. Luvi is not a talkative man. In fact, he seems uncomfortable in conversations that revolve around anything other than the arts -- and he can be a vicious critic of those since he often savagely picks apart the faults of a painting, ballad, or design he feels is too pedestrian.

Because Luvi is such a sharp-tongued critic, many people presume that the half-elf is mean spirited and confrontational. The truth is that he has a kind and gentle soul -- he is just painfully shy. Luvi is bold only when speaking about art because he has such passion for the

subject and is supremely confident in his knowledge and opinions.

Originally from the Elven Court on the plane of Arborea, the half-elf was apprenticed at an early age to the court's master clothier. Young Luvi quickly proved to have a gift for fashion, and he created jackets, gowns, and accessories that became the most sought after in the realm. Indeed, nobles and financiers from all the good-aligned planes traveled to Arborea and willingly spent fortunes to get Luvi to design an outfit for them -- all this while he was still an apprentice.

Luvi saw his master getting rich, and the already well-heeled courtiers strutting around like peacocks in his clothing. He, himself, was still forced to dress only in the plain robes of an apprentice, and he noticed that the clothing worn by common folk was serviceable but mind-numbingly dull. In secret, he began to design outfits for the servants and commoners -- clothing that was practical, bespoke of their station, but yet still had flair and style. When his master found out, Luvi was beaten. "Fashion is for those who can afford it," the clothier said. "Your designs are art. Why do you want to drape them across pigs?" As soon as his wounds healed, Luvi ran away from his master, abandoning his apprenticeship and leaving the plane of Arborea forever.

In his heart, he agreed with his former master that his designs were art. But Luvi completely disagreed that they should be only for the rich. He believed that art was for everyone, no matter how poor or rich, and he meant to share his designs with anyone who wanted them. Eventually, he settled on the Plane of Shadow because it presented an interesting challenge. Everything on the plane appears colorless, so his designs had to be created using only his memory of what the hues and values of the cloth was. If anything, Luvi's work only improved.

Luvi began taking his outfits to the Material Plane -- as unfashionable and bucolic a place as there is in the planes. Not surprisingly, his work again became much sought after. But he noticed that these people were deprived of so much more than just fashion. Their limited understanding of the planes meant that they did not even take full advantage of the meager resources of their own plane, let alone any others. So, back on the Plane of Shadows, he began inviting other merchants to join him on his excursions, hoping to expose the masses to even more of the amazing worlds beyond their own. It was then that Luvi met a gnome mercantile broker named Nana Júichi who seemed to have the same noble goals in mind that he did. The two worked together to form what has since come to be known as the Itinerant Bazaar.

Of course, Luvi has since learned that his partner's motives are much less pure than his own. She wants to use the bazaar for her own personal gains, with no care for the effects it has on the people of the Material Plane. But for the most part, that does not matter. The half-elf has created a market for his designs and a way to share them with the entirety of reality. His art can be seen, purchased, and worn by anyone.

Luvi's Stats

Luvi is best off taking levels of bard or rogue, though he might have a level or two of wizard thrown in if you want him to make enhanced clothing without assistance. He should have a high Intelligence score and a low Charisma score. He always has the maximum possible number of ranks in Appraise, Craft (tailoring), and Profession (tailor). Luvi uses his Craft (tailoring) skill to make his wares and his Profession (tailor) skill to create his designs. He also keeps his scores as high as possible in several Knowledge categories including history, local, nobility and royalty, and the planes.

As far as feats go, Luvi tends toward those that enhance his abilities such as Diligent and Skill Focus. He does not take offensive combat feats, but he might choose one or two that would make him avoid damage, such as Stealthy or the Dodge tree.

Sample Statistics for 6th Level

Luvi Tonne: Male half-elf bard 3/wizard 3; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 3d6+3 plus 3d4+3; hp 23; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, +1 *quarterstaff*); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, +1 *quarterstaff*); SQ bardic knowledge +8, bardic music (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1) 3/day, half-elf traits, low-light vision; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +11, Concentration +4, Craft (tailoring) +15, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +1, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Listen +11, Perform (sing) +2, Profession (tailor) +11, Search +4, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +6, Spot +5; Alertness, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Craft [tailoring]).

Bardic Knowledge: Luvi may make a bardic knowledge check with a bonus of +8 to see whether he knows some relevant information about local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Bardic Music: Luvi can use his song or poetics to produce magical effects on those around him.

Countersong (Su): Luvi can counter magical effects that depend on sound by making a Perform check for each round of countersong. Any creature within 30 feet of him that is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack may use Luvi's Perform check result in place of his or her saving throw if desired. Countersong lasts for

10 rounds. *Fascinate (Sp)*: Luvi can cause a single creature within 90 feet that can see and hear him to become fascinated with him. Luvi's Perform check result is the DC for the opponent's Will save. Any obvious threat breaks the effect. Fascination lasts 3 rounds.

Inspire Competence (Su): Luvi can use his music to help an ally succeed at a task. The ally must be within 30 feet and able to see and hear Luvi. The ally gets a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with a particular skill as long as he or she continues to hear the bard's music. The DM may rule that certain uses of this ability are infeasible. The effect lasts as long as Luvi concentrates, up to a maximum of 2 minutes. Luvi can't inspire competence in himself. Inspire competence is a mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Courage (Su): Allies who can hear Luvi receive a +1 morale bonus to saves against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls. The effect lasts for 5 rounds after the ally can no longer hear him.

Half-Elf Traits: Luvi is immune to magic sleep spells and effects, and he has elven blood (for all effects related to race, he is considered an elf). Luvi also has a +2 racial bonus on saves against enchantment spells or effects, a +2 racial bonus on diplomacy and Gather Information checks, and a +1 racial bonus on Listen, Spot, and Search checks (already figured into the statistics given above).

Bard Spells Known: None (insufficient Charisma to cast bard spells).

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *arcane mark, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation*; 1st -- *hypnotism, message, true strike*; 2nd -- *glitterdust, Tasha's hideous laughter*.

Spellbook: 0 -- *acid splash, arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1st -- *animate rope, disguise self, hypnotism, identify, mage armor, message, sleep, true strike, unseen servant*; 2nd -- *continual flame, daylight, glitterdust, Tasha's hideous laughter, web*.

Possessions: +1 quarterstaff, ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +1.

Unfriendly Competition

Although they are partners, it should be clear that Nana and Luvi have different goals and expectations for the Itinerant Bazaar. So, to make things more palatable, they agreed upon a set of rules of behavior for both the organization and any vendor associated with it. To appease Nana's desire for broad-scale information gathering, the bazaar visits all corners of the world, but to satisfy Luvi's desire for equanimity, it visits each locale only once in a very great while. To meet the half-elf's desire to introduce new ideas and concepts, the vendors sell items that their customers cannot find at other markets, but to meet the gnome's need for friendly relations with native power brokers, the visiting merchants are forbidden from directly competing with (and thereby angering) the locals.

This might seem needlessly complex, but both Luvi and Nana feel a sense of ownership to the bazaar -- they built it from nothing into a legendary organization. They also both have long-term goals for which it is the only viable engine. So they have made peace and agreed to disagree, swearing never to take part in any effort to undermine or oust the other from a position of authority within the bazaar. But the truth is that nothing would make either one of these uncomfortable partners happier than to see the other forced out of the picture.

Bringing the Parts Together

If the PCs come across the bazaar, allow them to interact with one or the other (or even both) of the proprietors. Perhaps Nana needs some information from the PCs and approaches them at the local tavern in a friendly manner "just to chat." Or maybe the PCs need some clothing from Luvi so that they are presentable in a future appearance at the local leader's house.

Coming in Part 3 of the Itinerant Bazaar

You know the basic rules of the bazaar. Now find out more of the specific rules!

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